

A man is performing a heavy squat in a gym. He is wearing a dark t-shirt, dark shorts, and a knee brace on his right knee. He is holding a large barbell with weights. The gym has a high ceiling with exposed pipes and lights. The background shows other gym equipment and people.

RAW BARBELL CLUB

AWESOME SQUAT PROGRAM

Get Strong, Squat Big &
Still Do Fitness

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RAW BARBELL CLUB

**AWESOME SQUAT
PROGRAM**

**GET STRONG, SQUAT BIG
AND STILL DO FITNESS**

BY ANDREW RAJEEVAN

[@TrainWithAndy](#)



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program be sure to Hashtag:**

#awesomesquatprogram
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So we can see you're progress!

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You can help us make more programs, more podcasts, more videos and more e-books.

All you need to do is donate, whatever amount you think this is worth. I.e. the cost of a coffee. If everyone donated a coffee we'd have money to produce one of these every couple of months!

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ABOUT: RAW BARBELL CLUB

RAW Barbell is an Olympic Weightlifting Club and Strength & Conditioning facility based in the Hawkesbury region of NSW, Australia. What started of as a humble gym has exploded. We have so many awesome athletes from so many different places with different backgrounds and different ability levels. We are the misfits of the strength scene and we are here to stay.

Over the last few years we have risen in popularity due to the success of our athletes, both in competition and in the gym. From lifting big weights to helping someone rehabilitate after back surgery we are movement experts. But more than that we are a family that want to get strong together.

Want to learn more about RAW Barbell Club?

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If you're thinking about using this program, please be smart. Don't participate in strenuous exercise unless cleared by a competent medical professional. Heavy weights can be dangerous, so only perform these exercises if you can do so safely. If you follow any of these programs or perform any of these exercises, you do so at your own risk.



Do I need to have a BIG squat?

If you're a CrossFitter it's highly likely that at some point in your training you'll realise that you're just not strong enough to keep making progress. Whether it be your snatches, cleans, deadlifts or even simpler things like wall balls, air- squats and running improving your overall squat strength will do wonders for your fitness.

How could it not? If you can generate more power if you can lift more weight, then everything else become easier as a percentage of your 1RM. Confused? Let me explain further. Let's say you have 3 workouts

One is 21-15-9 Push Presses at 50kg & Toes 2 Bar

One is an EMOM of 7 Squat Cleans at 60kg (ODD) & a 200m run (EVEN)

One is an AMRAP of 20 Air squats, 15 Pull Ups & 10 Push ups

If your squat is only 80kg, those push presses in the first work out are going to be tough, there is no way you're going to do the second workout WELL or at all, and in the third you'll be fine in but where some would breeze through the squat you might need to take your time..

Now let's say your squat is 120kg.. this is 40kg on top of our first example or a 66% difference in strength. Those 50kg push presses are going to feel like a breeze on the legs, which is going to allow you to be faster on the T2B as well (due to having less fatigued shoulders). The second workout with the cleans? Well the % of strength just went down to half.. so they are going to be feeling markedly better than the first time around.. Oh and that last workout? The AMRAP, most likely you'll be using the squats as your pacing exercise, and pushing through on the pull ups and push ups..

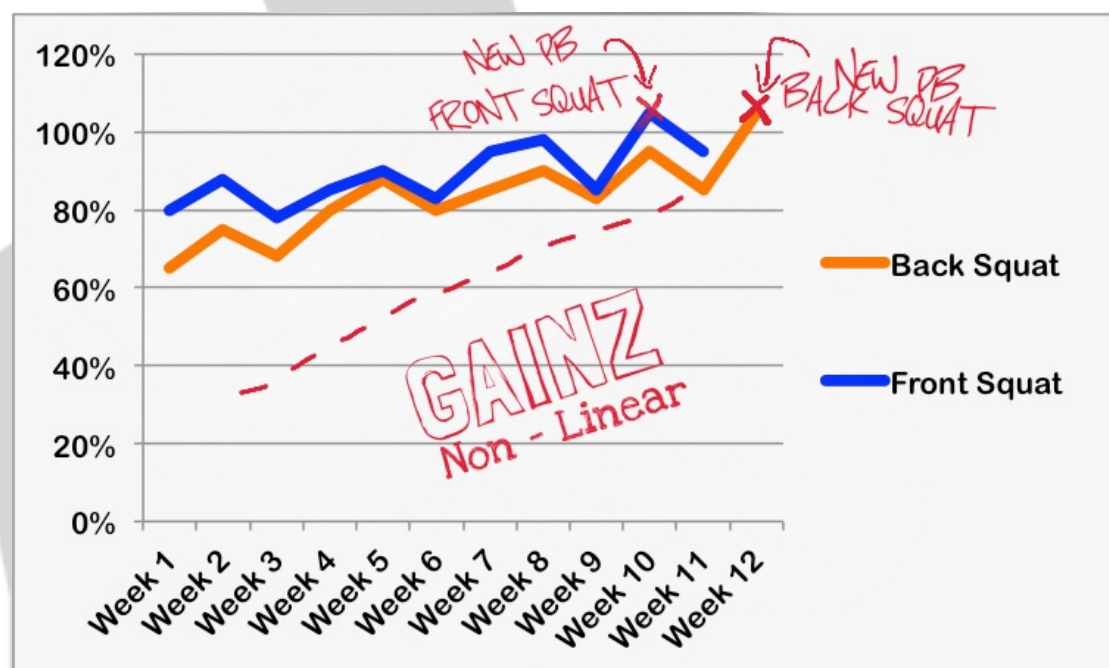
How Do I Squat Big?

So now that you actually want to improve your squatting strength how do we do it? At RAW Barbell Club we've trained a lot of CrossFitter's and the biggest thing we've learned is that CrossFit is a whole different animal to weightlifting, powerlifting or any sport in between. Yes you do all the same movements but eh demands of CrossFit workouts and the randomness of the movements, intensity and volume make it very difficult to stick to a general strength program, particularly one that asks you to hit percentages of your max as you go throughout..

Other programs play it way to fast and loose with Rep Maxes and RPE's (rate of perceived exertion) and they pay no heed to the ebb and flow of your need to recover.

This is where this program differs. It's simple, it uses the concepts of a linear block style of periodization in a 3 week wave that allows for recovery and adaptation to take place within the realms of your current Crossfit Training.. Basically it pushes the envelope enough to make some serious gainz without being so rigid that you've got no leeway and break down.

Just remember you are not going to PR your squat every week. There will be natural peaks and troughs, but don't be discouraged if your progress looks different to this, everyone is unique and will ebb and flow on there own cycle ☺ We want you to have a general trend of improvement but the real test is at the end of the 12 weeks. Similar but not exactly the same as the graph below:



The Program

Before I explain the program there are some important terms and concepts I need you to understand. Reading this part will help you better understand the program when to push the weights a lot and when to take it easy.



Predicted MAX

Your predicted max is the weight we can predict you'll be able to hit for one rep taken from what you can hit for 2 or more reps. Generally speaking the formula we use gets a lot more accurate as we go down in reps and less accurate as the reps increase. Funny enough CrossFitters can generally hit quite close to their maxes for multiple reps, so it's going to be weird the first time you go through the program and we may have to adjust the formula in the future, but the big thing is we want to see the predicted max go up in our heavy weeks.

$$\text{Predicted Max} = (\text{Weight} \times \text{Reps} \times 0.033) + \text{Weight}$$

Eg. Lets say my current max is 110kg, but during the course of this program I'm able to hit 5 reps at 100kg. Surely I've gotten stronger which means my percentages on light weeks would have gone up right?

Lets use the above formula: If my Predicted Max is equal to the weight I hit (100kg) multiplied by Reps I did it for (5) multiplied by 0.033, then take the number we get and add the weight again (100kg), we get 116.5kg. This is a 6.5kg increase we are looking at and something we'll want to keep in mind as we travel through the program.

$$(100\text{kg} \times 5 \text{ Reps} \times 0.033) + 100 = 116.5\text{kg}$$

RPE

Rate of perceived exertion is a sliding scale to measure how hard or easy a set of squats is. A higher RPE means that the set was very difficult for you where a lower RPE would mean the set was easier for you. For example a set of 5 squats at 9 RPE and a set of 5 squats at 6 RPE are very different things. Check out the chart below for more guidance. If you find it difficult to use RPE's to calculate your squat weights, feel free to use the percentage guides provided.

RPE SCALE	RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION
10	MAX Effort Activity Dead.. Well only if you miss this squat. It's gonna be really hard and you won't be able to go again.
9	Very Hard Activity These are very tough sets. It would be very difficult to maintain this intensity for multiple sets, let alone reps
7-8	Vigorous Activity Things are quite tough now, you need to really concentrate on the task at hand
4-6	Moderate Activity Breathing becomes more difficult but you can hold a short conversation, things are starting to get hard
2-3	Light Activity Feels like you can do this for hours, you can breathe easy and hold a conversation
1	Very Light Activity Hardly any exertion, but more than Sleeping or watching Netflix etc.

Percentage Guides

If you look at the program you'll notice that some weeks we ask you to hit specific percentages of your current 1RM and other weeks we have put them in as a guide so you know where in the range you should aim for. On days when RM (rep maxes) are set feel free to go over or under the percentages these are there as a guide only

Rep Maxes or RM

A rep max is the maximum amount of weight you can lift for the determined rep scheme. For example a 1RM squat would be the maximum amount of weight you can lift for 1 rep, where a 5RM squat would be the maximum amount of weight you can lift for 5 reps.

Drop set

Sometimes getting strong is not just about lifting more weight as an absolute number but being able to lift more weight overall. Often in this program you will see a drop set programmed. This is where you build up to a heavy weight then drop the weight back and perform 1 or more 'drop sets'. In this way we can add more work at weights that you can safely lift with good technique, especially if you are already fatigued from your heavy set.



Warming Up

Warming up properly has the ability to make or break your workouts. Ideally you want to perform your squats before you are fatigued by a CrossFit WOD or conditioning. We want you to get in early before the class starts and hit this workout out of the park. I realise sometime this might not be possible so if you do your CrossFit workout first and you are already warm, then you are good to go. Just please be safe!

A good warm-up gets you ready for the workout. It should do 3 things. Increase your core temperature, improve your mobility and improve the feeling within your joints.

An example of a good warm-up might be.

1. 3-5 minutes on a Roller, releasing tight, muscles & fascia.
2. 5 minutes on a Air Bike or Rower getting faster around the 3-4 minute mark
3. Specific mobility and flexibility work. Things like goblet squats to stretch out your hips or calf stretches with light weights
4. Low intensity core work. 2 sets of 30-45 second of planks or hollow holds
5. Light weight full movements, in our case this would be empty bar back or front squats

Mobility

To perform this program correctly you really need to be mobile enough to get into the positions we ask. If you cannot I advise you to consult a good physiotherapist. In the mean time if you would still like to get strong you may squat to a box. Please be mindful of you safety and always use a spotter when box squatting.

THE PROGRAM

So first up I've put a little table outline of the program. One day you'll be doing back squats, which will be the heavier day and the second day you will be performing your front squats. My advice would be to try to spread these out so that you have at least 2 days between the two squat days and limit heavy deadlifting and other compound movements on the days that you do end up using this program. At the end of the day you really need to eat lots, sleep lots and listen to your body. If you're feeling super tired and run down. Do your squats the next day. We'll go more into depth on the program below

WEEK	BACK SQUAT DAY	FRONT SQUAT DAY
WEEK 1 TRANSITION WEEK	(55-65% x 10) x 2	Heavy 5 Front Squat Then -15%x5
WEEK 2 HEAVY WEEK	10RM Back Squat Then -10% x 10	5RM Front Squat Then (-10% x 5) x 2
WEEK 3 LIGHT WEEK	(68% x 8) x 3	(78% x 5) x 3
WEEK 4 MEDIUM WEEK	Heavy 5 Back Squat Then (-10% x 5) x 2	3RM Front Squat Then (-10% x 3) x 3
WEEK 5 HEAVY WEEK	5RM Back Squat Then (-10% x 5) x 3	3RM Front Squat Then (-10% x 3) x 4
WEEK 6 LIGHT WEEK	(70-80% x 4) x 4	(73-83% x 3) x 5
WEEK 7 MEDIUM WEEK	Heavy 3 Back Squat Then (-10% x 3) x 3	2RM Front Squat Then (-10% x 2) x 3
WEEK 8 HEAVY WEEK	3RM Back Squat Then (-7% x 2) x 3	2RM Front Squat Then (-7% x 1) x 3
WEEK 9 MEDIUM WEEK	(83% x 3) x 2	(85% x 3) x 2
WEEK 10 HEAVY WEEK	2RM Back Squat Then (-20% x 3) x 3	1RM Front Squat
WEEK 11 MEDIUM WEEK	(85% x 2) x 3	95% x 1
WEEK 12 HEAVY WEEK	Back Squat 1RM Test on a day you are Fresh	

WEEK 1 – Transition Week

Week 1 is like our phase in week, you can't just go from zero to 100 when you're adding a whole lot of volume so the goal is to transition our way into this squat program. The weights for our back squat are relatively light and the front squat we can push a bit more but don't go for broke. I promise you'll get your chance!

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to 2 sets of 10 at 55-65% (5-6 RPE)

**Should feel reasonably easy, go lighter if necessary but not too heavy, we'll go heavy in the next few weeks!*

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to a heavy set of 5 Front Squat (6-7 RPE)

***Should be hard but not super grindy**

**Aim for between 70%-80% of your current 1RM*

Then drop back to 85% of above for 1 set of 5 reps

WEEK 2 – Heavy Week

I told you that you could go heavy soon! This week we want to push your squat whilst keeping great technique. This is our real test and we can even calculate some Predicted maxes of these numbers 😊

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to a 10RM Back Squat (Aim for between 65-75%) (7 RPE)

**I don't mind if you push the heavy 10 today, but I want very good technique.*

**No Points if it's sloppy. But extra points for prettiness*

Then drop back to 90% of above for 1 set of 10

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to a 5RM (7-8 RPE)

***Try to add 2-5kg on last weeks effort**

**Aim for between 78%-88% of your current 1RM*

Then drop back to 90% of above for 2 sets of 5 reps

WEEK 3 – Light Week

We'll use those predicted maxes to see how we line up this week for our light percentage work. We got to go really heavy last week so this week it's all about just getting in the volume. It will ramp back up again quickly.

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to 3 sets of 8 reps at 68% (6 RPE)

**This is meant to be a lighter week so really don't push it even if you are feeling great, we get to go heavy next week 😊*

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to 3 sets of 5 at 78% (7 RPE)

**This is meant to be a lighter week so really don't push it even if you are feeling great.*

WEEK 4 – Medium Week

Trying to improve on the last few weeks of squatting without breaking the bank. Show some restraint and only try to increase your squat by 2-5 kg. any bigger a jump and you may burn yourself out. Small incremental progress is actually where the gainz are!!

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to a heavy set of 5 Back Squat (7 RPE)

**(Aim for between 70-80%)*

**I don't mind if you push the heavy 5 today, but I want very good technique.*

Then drop back to 90% of above for 2 sets of 5

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to a 3RM Front Squat (8 RPE)

**Heavier than week 2's 5RM*

**Aim for between 75%-85% of you current 1RM*

Then drop back to 90% of above for 3 sets of 3 reps

WEEK 5 – Heavy Week

Heavy week is where the fun is. You get to push it today and try go heavier than last week for the same rep scheme. We get a rest next week so there is almost nothing to lose..

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to a 5RM Back Squat (*Aim for between 78-88%*) (7-8 RPE)

***Heavier than last week if possible**

**I don't mind if you push the heavy 5 today, but I want very good technique.*

Then drop back to 90% of above for 3 sets of 5

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to a 3RM Front Squat - *Aim for between 80%-90%* (8-9 RPE)

***Heavier than last weeks attempt**

Then drop back to 90% of above for 4 sets of 3 reps

WEEK 6 – Light Week

Reload week, get through the working sets and have fun. It's time to lift some real tin next week..

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to 4 sets of 4 reps at 70%-80% (6 RPE)

**This is meant to be a lighter week so really don't push it even if you are feeling great, we get to go heavy next week 😊*

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to 5 sets of 3 at 73-83% (7 RPE)

**This is meant to be a lighter week so really don't push it even if you are feeling great.*

WEEK 7 – Medium Week

We are getting into the tail end of the program; the reps are getting much heavier

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to a heavy set of 3 Back Squat (8 RPE)

- *(Aim for between 75-85%)*

**I don't mind if you push the heavy 3, but great technique*

Then drop back to 90% of above for 3 sets of 3

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to a 2RM Front Squat - *Aim for between 85%-95% (8 RPE)*

Then drop back to 90% of above for 3 sets of 2 reps

WEEK 8 – Heavy Week

This is a week where you can really push the weight. You have my permission to go hard.

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to a 3RM Back Squat - *(Aim for between 80-90%) (9 RPE)*

**1-4kg on last week*

**I don't mind if you push the heavy 3, but great technique*

Then drop back to 93% of above for 3 sets of 2

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to a 2RM Front Squat - *Aim for between 88%-98% (8-9 RPE)*

**1-4kg on last week*

Then drop back to 93% of above for 3 sets of 1 rep

WEEK 9 – DELOAD

This is our final deload week before our last heavy week, you might not feel like you need it, but really focus on your technique and dial that in. we are on track.

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to 2 sets of 3 reps at 83% (7 RPE)

**This is meant to be a lighter week so really don't push it even if you are feeling great, we get to go heavy next week 😊*

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to 3 sets of 2 at 85% (7 RPE)

**This is meant to be a lighter week so really don't push it even if you are feeling great.*

WEEK 10 – Heavy Week

This is our final heavy week before we get to test our back squat. The 2RM Back Squat should be a clean lift. Not so grindy that you die. The front squat is where our real test is. Lets get after it!

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to a 2RM Back Squat - (Aim for between 85-95%) (8 RPE)

Then drop back to 80% of above for 3 sets of 3

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to a 1RM Front Squat - Aim for between 95%-105% (9-10 RPE)

WEEK 11 **TAPER WEEK**

In these next two weeks I want you to go a lot easier in your CrossFit. Lets get through those WOD, but not push the intensity, really we've been putting in all this work over the last 12 weeks for this so let the recovery happen.

DAY 1

Back Squat

Work up to 3 sets of 2 reps at 85% (7-8 RPE)

DAY 2

Front Squat

Work up to a Front Squat single at 95% (7 RPE)

WEEK 12 **TESTING WEEK**

Are you ready to PR? I am. If you listened to me last week you should feel reasonably well rested for our single squat day. We are gonna kill it. Let put on our favourite song, and crush this thing!

DAY 1

REST DAY – NO SQUATS

DAY 2

Back Squat – Work up to a heavy single. Try beat your 1RM by 2-5kg first then if still feeling good you may go up. **Aim for between 102%-105%* (9-10 RPE)

RINSE AND REPEAT

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